



Victor Dominello MP

Minister for Citizenship and Communities
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
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MEDIA RELEASE

Sunday 1 March 2015

SMART TECHNOLOGY TO BOLSTER ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE LEARNING

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Victor Dominello today announced \$185,000 in funding for the development of an app to support the maintenance and revitalisation of five Aboriginal languages in NSW.

Mr Dominello said the app, through mobile devices, will provide audio recordings of commonly used words and phrases in the languages of Bundjalung, Gamilaraay/ Yuwaalaraay/ Yuwaalayaay, Gumbaynggirr, Paakantji and North West Wiradjuri.

"The content of the app will be determined by communities associated with the Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest sites established in 2014," Mr Dominello said.

"Aboriginal students who have the opportunity to learn traditional language are often more engaged in the classroom – helping them to build a stronger sense of individual pride and cultural identity.

"The sustainability of remaining Aboriginal languages will be compromised if we do not make a long-term investment to train more people to teach traditional languages.

"That's why, through *OCHRE*: the NSW Government Plan for Aboriginal affairs, we've made a significant investment to revitalise the teaching of language and this initiative will help to bolster the work of the five Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests.

"The Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards and the Department of Education and Communities will work with the five Language Nests communities to develop a customised app during 2015.

"A language app may contain word matching and text translation games where learners look at an image or listen to an audio recording. It may also be used to identify the written form of the word or to translate phrases between an Aboriginal language and English.

"Once developed, the app will enable knowledge holders across the five nests – which include Aboriginal community elders, language teachers and students – to work collaboratively to learn and record traditional language."

Mr Dominello said that each of the five nests represented partnerships between Aboriginal communities, schools, TAFEs, and universities designed to connect and coordinate language resources.

"Ultimately the Baird Government wants to build better pathways to enable Aboriginal people to learn traditional language and culture from cradle to grave and to preserve its teaching for future generations," Mr Dominello said.

NSW AECG President Cindy Berwick said, "For learners being introduced to Aboriginal languages in the community or at school, the languages app will reinforce face-to-face learning from Elders and other language speakers."

A suitable provider will be engaged to develop the app technology, which will be available for free through iOS and Android.

The five Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests are based in Coffs Harbour (Gumbaynggirr), Dubbo (North West Wiradjuri), Lightning Ridge (Yuwaalaraay/Yuwaalayaay) Lismore (Bundjalung) and Wilcannia (Paarkkintji/Barkindjii).

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